

The Marlin Model 39A

Larry's Short Story #289

What is it that makes a gun of interest to a collector? For me, it has to be “interesting,” something special about it that may or may not be of interest to others. I have a Browning Superposed 20 gauge and a Winchester Model 94 30/30, that were both made the year I was born; well, that's interesting – at least to me.

There's often a back story behind older guns. Marlin made a million or so Model 39A rifles from 1939 to 2007, at which time the company was acquired by Remington. They aren't rare, but every once in a while, a special one comes along - with a serious backstory. This one was made during the first year of production – 1939. It's a Deluxe model, with checkered stocks and special sights - and scope mount capabilities. Finally, the bore is perfect and the varnish on the stocks, blue on the barrel and colors on the receiver, from the case hardening process, are all in excellent condition. The Marlin factory began producing lever action .22 rifles in 1891, with that year being used as the model number on their first lever action .22 rifle – Model 1891. With improvements, it became the Model 1892. The succeeding Model 1897 was their first takedown model. In 1922, Marlin improved it again, and the model number was changed to Model 39. Now fast forward another 17 years to 1939. The last change was mostly for cosmetic and cost - savings reasons; the octagon barrel was replaced with a round one and the stock and forend were made slightly larger. The “A” suffix was also added at this time, to become the Model 39A.

Marlin is one of those great American gunmakers that started up in the 19th century and produced quality guns all through the 20th and into the 21st century. They always used quality steel and walnut and the modern production methods of the time, with the gunmaking workforce around New Haven, Connecticut – also home of Winchester. Every gun collector knows the name Marlin, and there are some serious collectors that specialize in them.

For me, this old Marlin Model 39A lever action .22 rifle is a nostalgic piece of gunmaking history that's “interesting.” It also looks good, feels good and shoots good! It's a joy to own, shoot and share with friends. All of that together earns a place in my collection.

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